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Vanita Mani

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GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

GLOBAL RESEARCH

ONE RESEARCH CIRCLE

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte VANITA MANI, DARREN L. HALLMAN and
OLGA K. ZHUSHMA

Appeal 2010-001022
Application 10/676,903
Technology Center 1700

Before EDWARD C. KIMLIN, BRADLEY R. GARRIS, and
TERRY J. OWENS, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

KIMLIN, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION ON APPEAL¹

This is an appeal from the final rejection of claim 1, 3-9, 11-15, 70-79 and 86. Claim 16-27, 29-33, 80-83 and 85 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 1 is illustrative:

1. A home laundry machine, comprising:
a laundry enclosure adapted to clean laundry in a cleaning fluid; and a drying mechanism pneumatically coupled to the laundry enclosure via an air inlet and an air outlet, comprising:

a vapor compression cycle system comprising a condenser, an evaporator, and a compressor disposed in a closed fluid path,

wherein the condenser is configured to heat air upstream of the inlet;
and wherein the evaporator is configured to cool air downstream of the air outlet.

The Examiner relies upon the following references in the rejection of the appealed claims:

Renzacci	5,887,454	Mar. 30, 1999
Berndt	6,059,845	May 9, 2000

Appellants' claimed invention is directed to a home laundry machine which comprises a drying mechanism coupled to an enclosure where the laundry is subjected to a cleaning fluid. The drying mechanism supplies heated air to the enclosure and comprises a vapor compression cycle system

¹ The two-month time period for filing an appeal or commencing a civil action, as recited in 37 C.F.R. § 1.304, or for filing a request for rehearing, as recited in 37 C.F.R. § 41.52, begins to run from the "MAIL DATE" (paper delivery mode) or the "NOTIFICATION DATE" (electronic delivery mode) shown on the PTOL-90A cover letter attached to this decision.

comprising a condenser, an evaporator, and a compressor that are disposed in a closed fluid path. The condenser heats air upstream of the inlet to the laundry enclosure.

Appealed claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11, 12, 14, 70, 74 and 86 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Renzacci. Claims 13, 15, 71 and 75-79 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Renzacci. Also, claims 6, 72 and 73 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Renzacci in view of Berndt.

We have thoroughly reviewed the respective positions advanced by Appellants and the Examiner. In so doing, we find ourselves in agreement with Appellants that the Examiner's rejections are not well founded.

According to the Examiner, condenser 26 and cooling unit 7 of Renzacci correspond to the claimed condenser and evaporator, respectively. However, the appealed claims require that the condenser and evaporator, as well as the compressor, are disposed in a closed fluid path, and the Examiner has not explained how the condenser and cooling unit of Renzacci are positioned in the same closed system. Manifestly, condenser 26 of Renzacci is in the solvent circulation system 20, whereas cooling unit 7 is in a separate and distinct drying air circulation system. As stated by Appellants, Renzacci fails to teach or suggest

element 7 and 26 as part of a vapor compression cycle system in a closed fluid path. As illustrated in FIG. 1, the Renzacci reference illustrates the cooling unit 7 as part of the drying air circulation system 4, whereas the condenser 26 is part of the solvent distillation system. The cooling unit 7 is simply not connected to a closed fluid path with the condenser 26.

(App. Brief 8, 1st para.)

While the Examiner explains that the condenser 26 of Renzacci is connected to the pump 22 which delivers the solvent spray to the washing tank, and the cooling unit 7 is connected to the outlet of the tank, these connections do not make them part of the same closed loop system (Ans. 8, 2nd para.).

The Examiner's additional citation of Berndt does not remedy the basic deficiency of Renzacci set forth above.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing, we are constrained to reverse the Examiner's rejections.

REVERSED

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